



Amesbury Council on Aging

68 Elm Street
Amesbury, Ma 01913
(Phone) 978-388-8138

Needs Assessment Survey Full Report May 2013



Report Submitted by:
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Needs Assessment Survey
Amesbury Senior Community Center
Council on Aging
May 2013

Mission Statement:

To advocate for older adults, to identify their needs, to meet their health, economic, social and cultural needs, to encourage maximum independence and to improve their quality of life.

Introduction:

The Amesbury Council on Aging (COA) moved into the new space at 68 Elm Street in July 2012. In an effort to best serve the community of Amesbury the COA embarked on completing a comprehensive needs assessment survey. The names of 3,404 people age 59 and older were obtained from the clerk's office and a survey was mailed to each individual. The COA serves Amesbury residents age 60 and older, the purpose of including individuals age 59 was to gather their input into upcoming services as they will be able to access them within the next year. The survey was considered for people age 55 and older and determined that would have been more costly.

A quick side note:

- The COA serves people age 60 and over, disabled and caregivers of seniors/disabled adults.
- Council on Aging (COA) is the department funded by the City
- Senior community center (SCC): is the space in which the COA uses to have activities/offices
- MVRTA Nicholas J. Costello Transportation Center is the name of the building
- FCOA: Friends of the Council on Aging, a 501c3 that supports the COA but is a separate entity with its own board
- Often times COA and SCC are used interchangeably

The Statics are below for each section of the survey including a comment section for those who completed the survey.

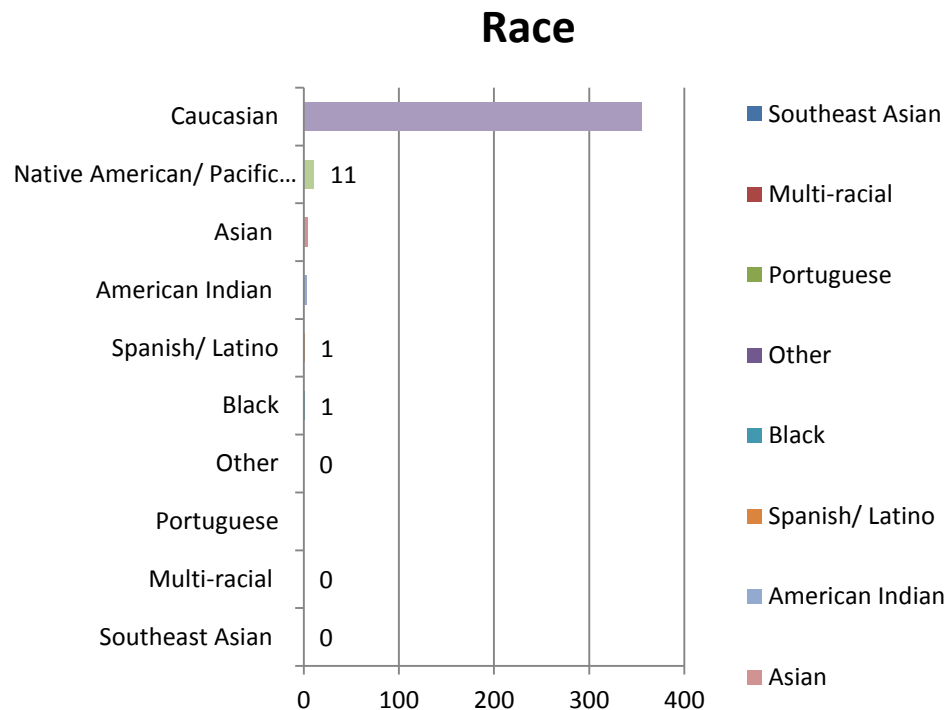
Needs Assessment Survey Amesbury Senior Community Center

A total of 3,404 surveys were distributed to members of the community age 59 and older.

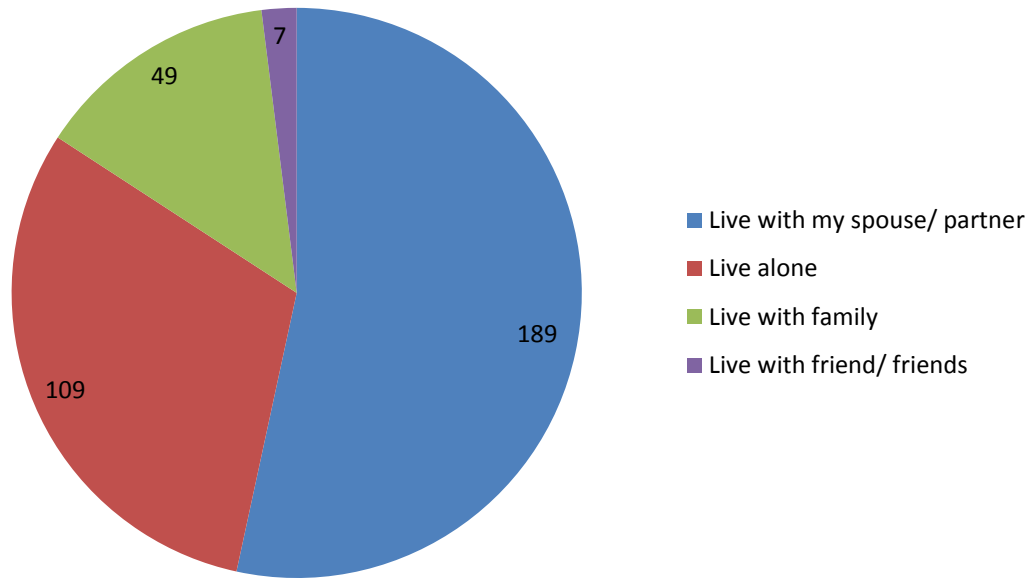
11.16% of the distributed surveys were returned and included in this report.

Data Report

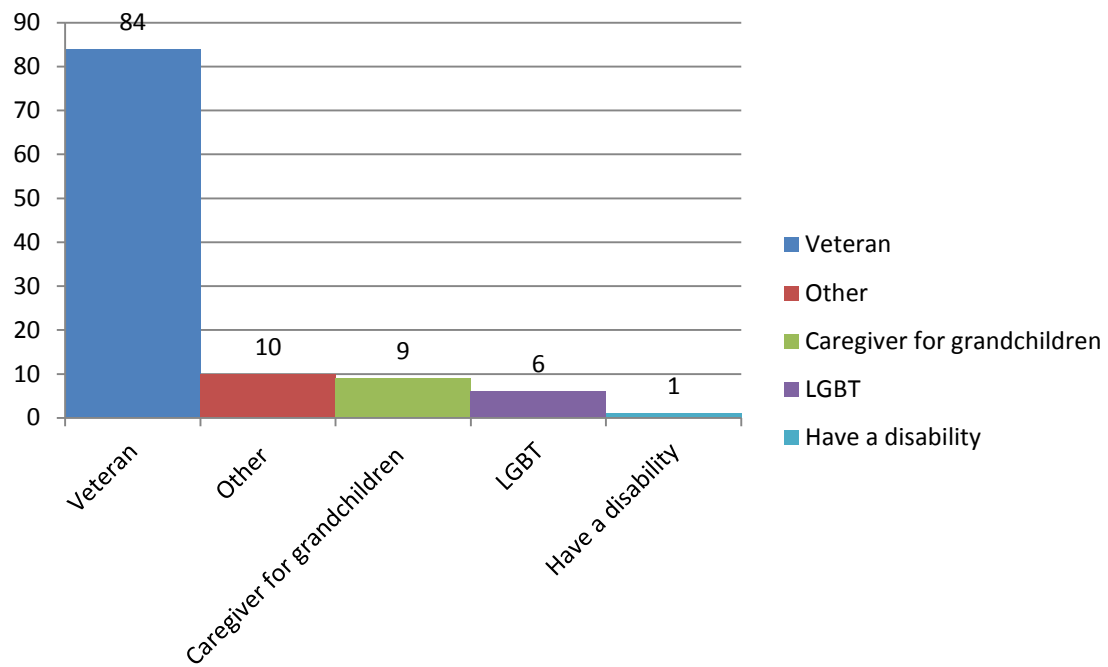
Community Profile



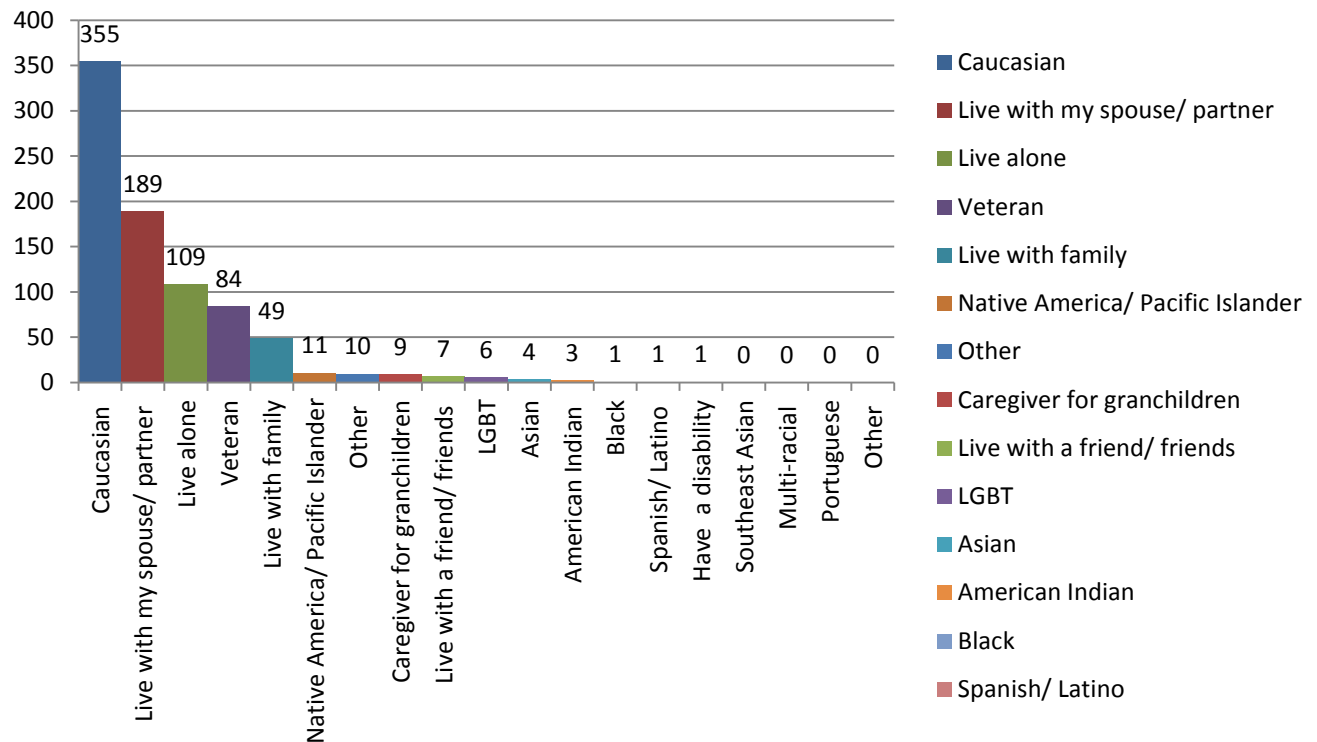
Living Situation



Personal Description



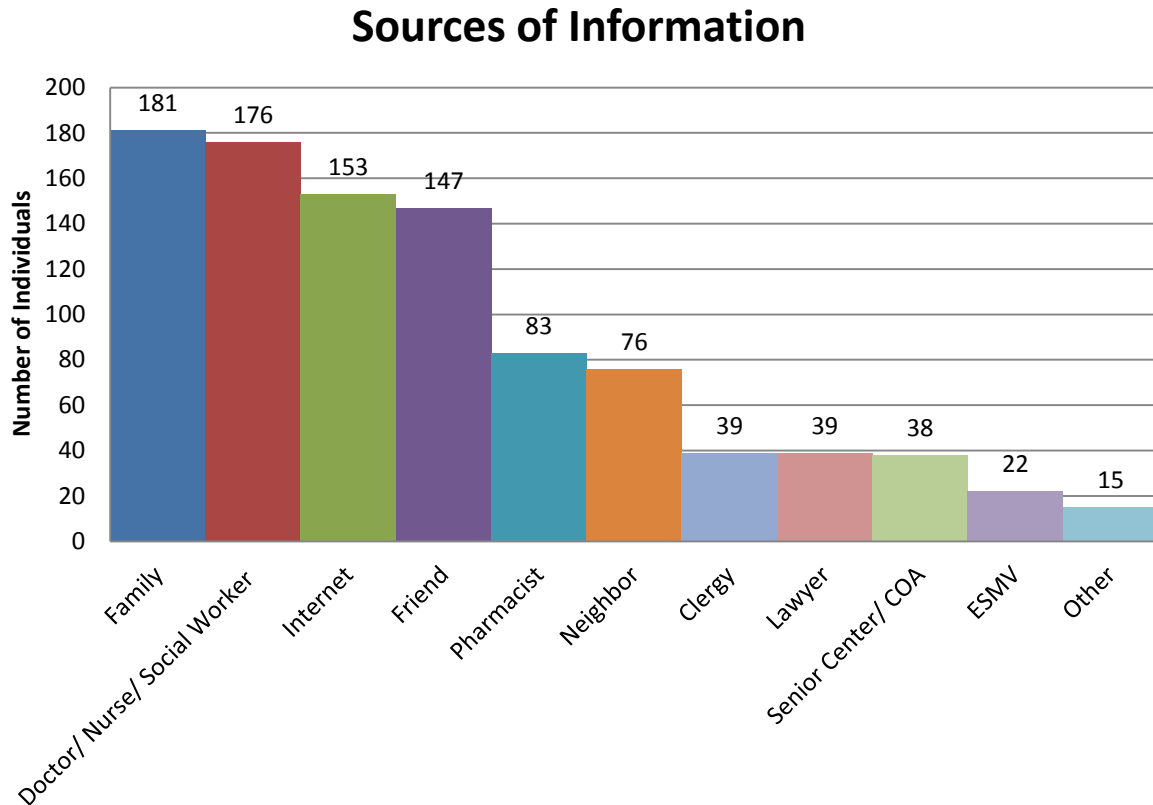
All Personal Identification Results



Description	Percentages
Caucasian	93.42%
Live with my spouse/ partner	49.74%
Live alone	28.69%
Veteran	22.10%
Live with family	12.89%
Native America/ Pacific Islander	2.89%
Other	2.63%
Caregiver for grandchildren	2.37%
Live with a friend/ friends	1.84%
LGBT	1.58%
Asian	1.05%
American Indian	0.79%
Black	0.26%
Spanish/ Latino	0.26%
Have a disability	0.26%
Southeast Asian	0%

Multi-racial	0%
Portuguese	0%
Other	0%

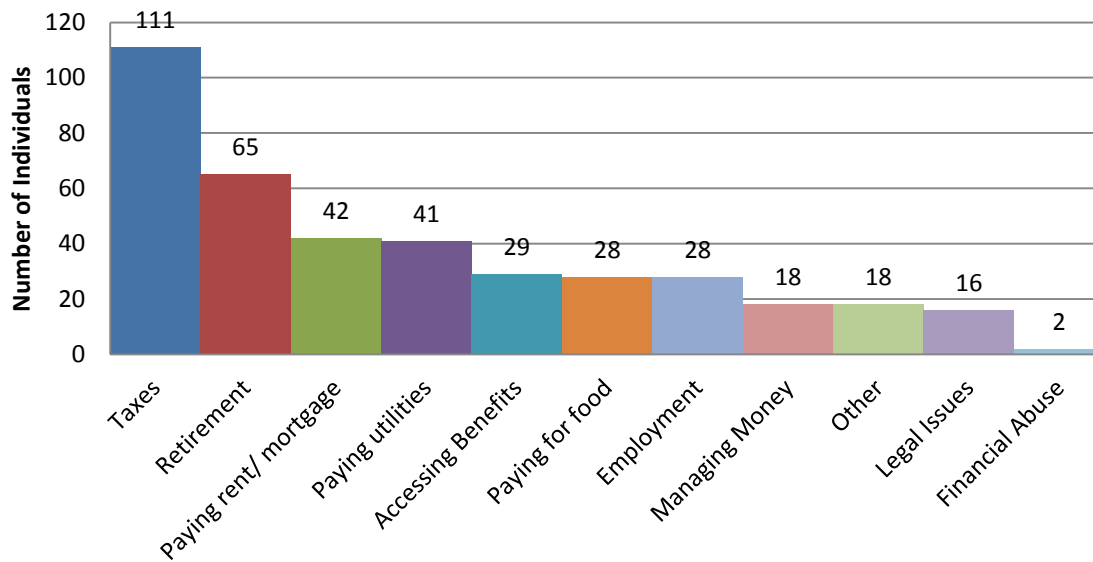
Informational Resources



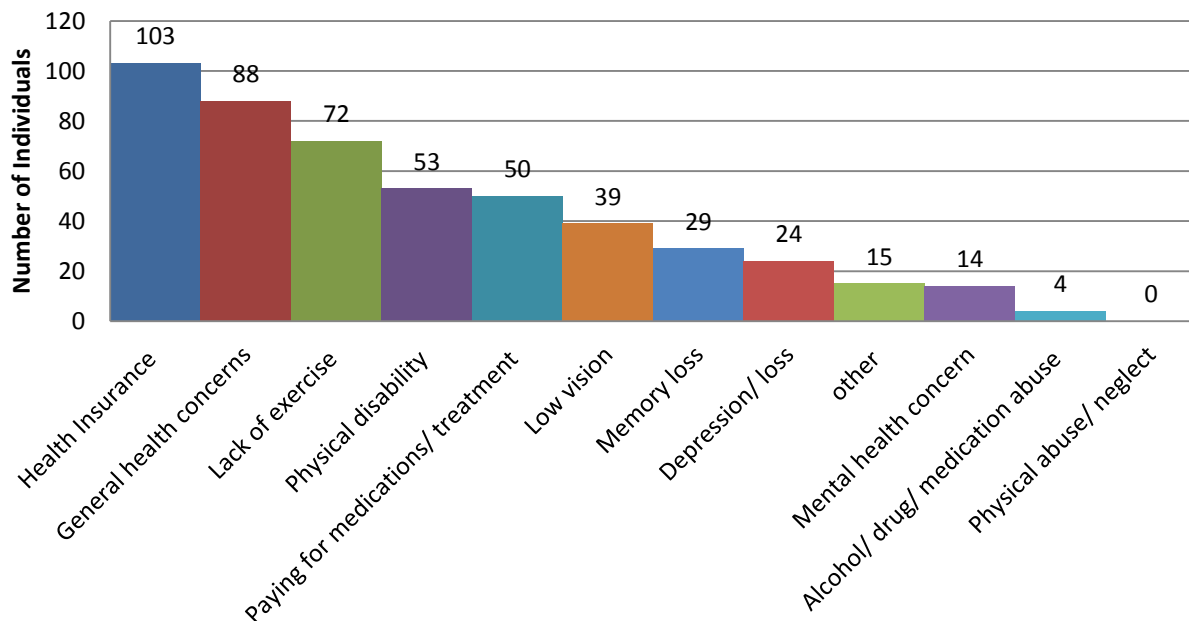
The Top Four Resources Currently Utilized:
1) Family
2) Doctor/ Nurse/ Social Worker
3) Internet
4) Friend

Assistance Needs

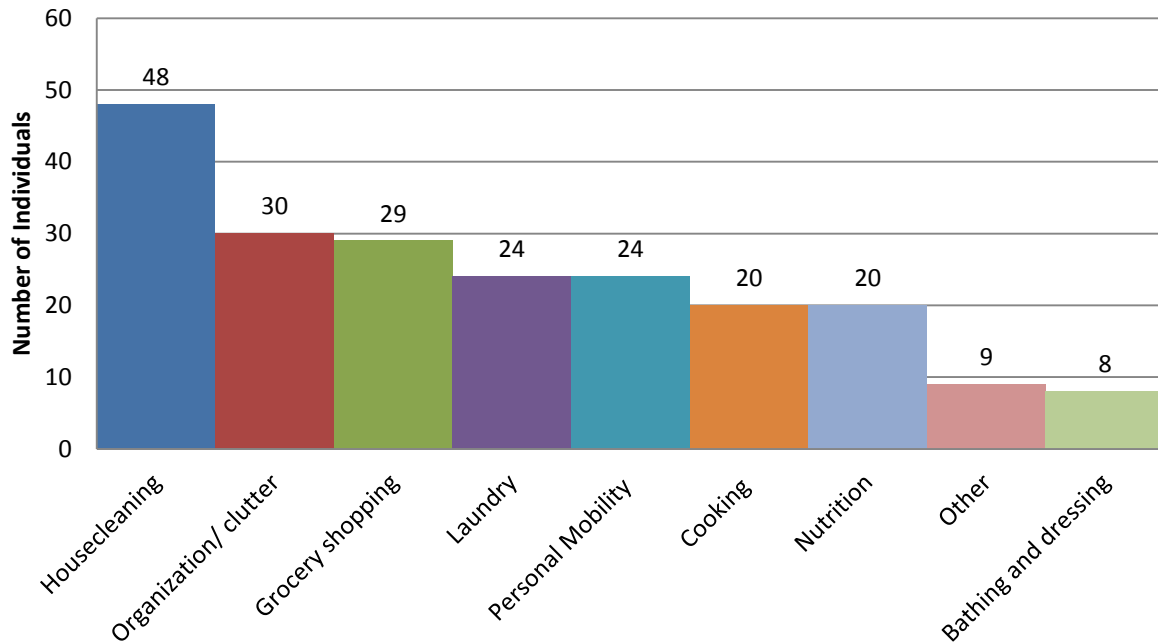
Financial/ Legal Needs



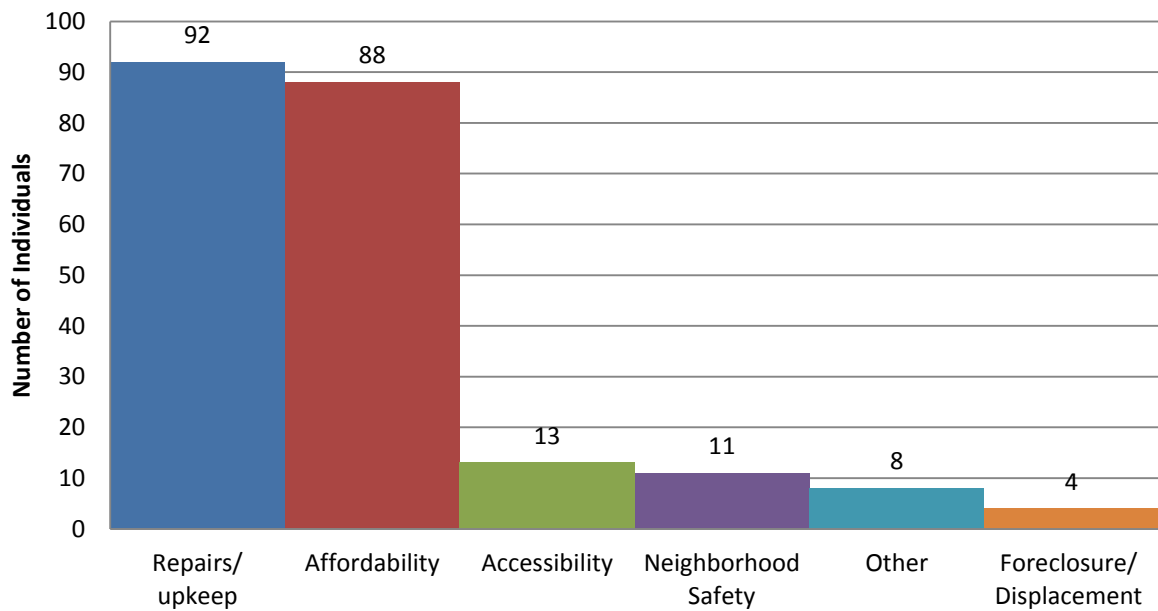
Health/ Safety Needs



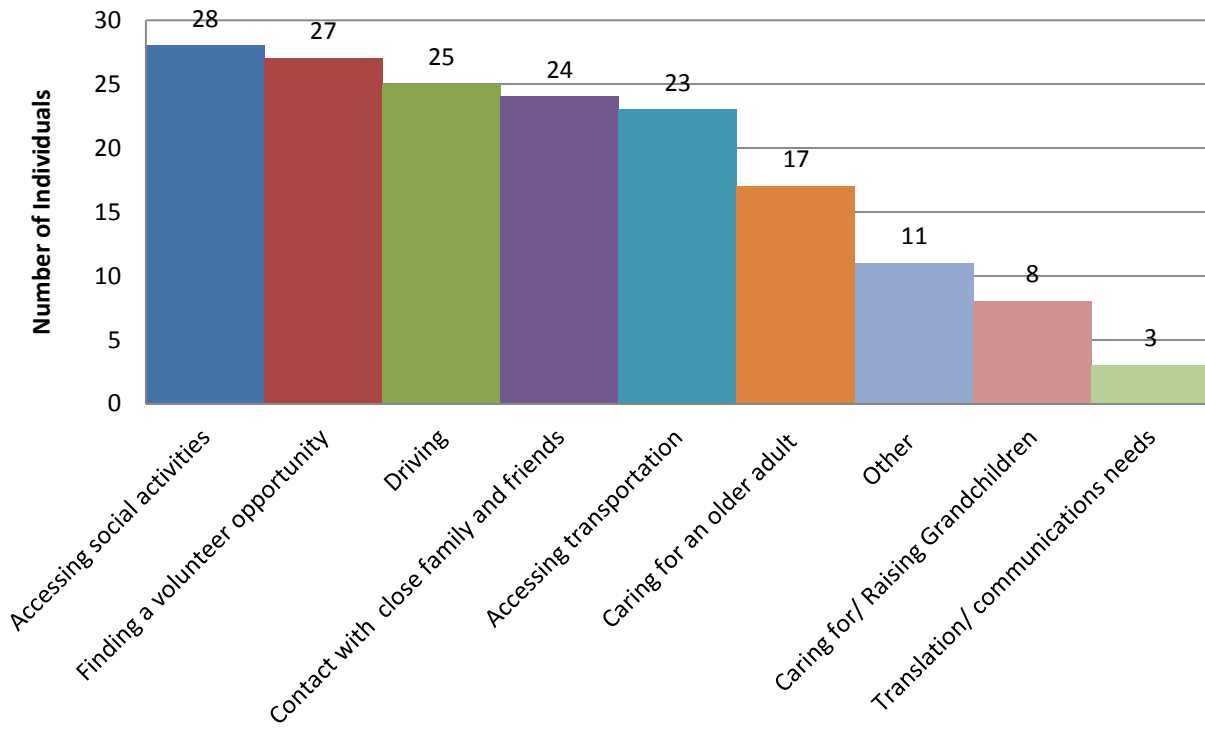
Household/ Personal Care Needs



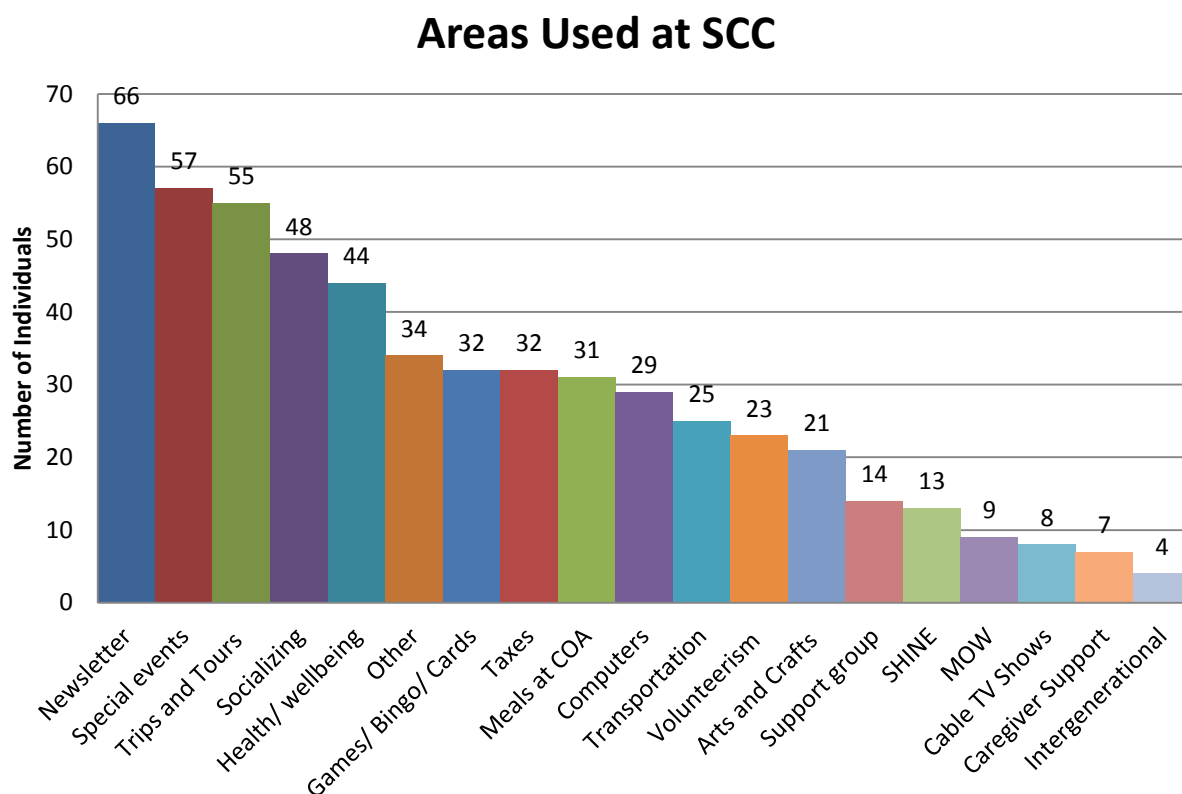
Housing/ Living Situation Needs



Social/ Transportation/ Family Needs



Resources Utilized at Amesbury Senior Community Center



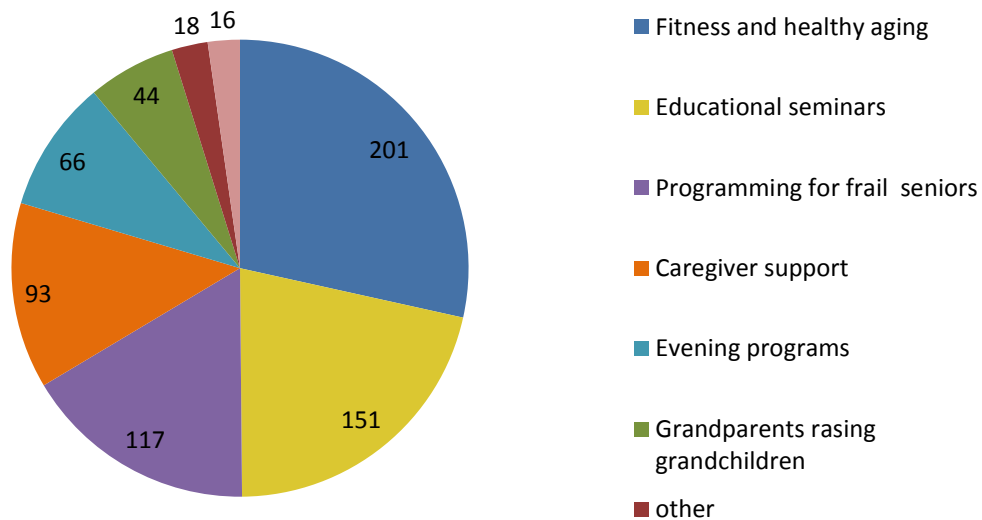
Services of the Senior Center Ordered by Reported Use

Area Used	Number of Individuals
Newsletter	66
Special events	57
Trips and tours	55
Socializing	48
Health/ well-being	44
Other	34
Games/ Bingo/ cards	32
Taxes	32
Meals at COA	31
Computers	29

Transportation	25
Volunteerism	23
Arts and crafts	21
Support Group	14
MOW	9
Cable TV shows	8
Caregiver Support	7
Intergenerational Programming	4

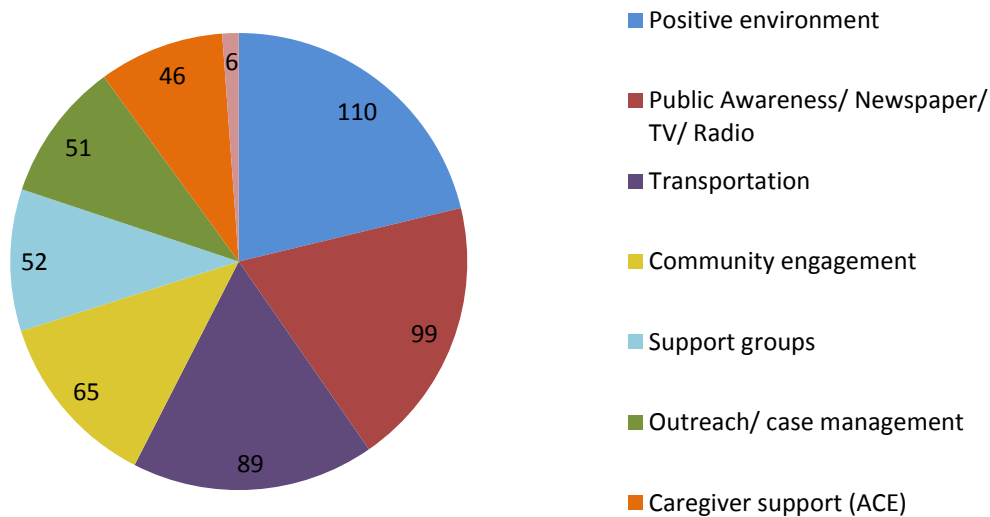
Focus of the Next Five Years

Five Year Development



Highlights of the Council on Aging

Areas the COA Does Well



Comments Section

What are our strengths?

Number of Responses	Needs Survey Comments Responses
5	Transportation
4	Warm caring welcoming atmosphere
4	Availability
3	Friendly staff
3	Activities ,art classes, craft classes, exercise classes
3	Communication
3	Physical plant
2	New facilities are beautiful

2	Not familiar with programs
2	Your activities coordinator Carolyn is always there to help
2	Helping seniors
2	A lot of different activities
2	Just about everything
2	Newsletter add more info
2	Meals/ the lunches
2	Support groups
2	Public awareness
2	Excellent director- Annmary
2	Computer training/availability
2	Diversity of programs
1	Outreach programs responsible to community
1	Energetic staff
1	Social
1	Doing good in things you now do
1	Social networking
1	Attitude and level of involvement show you care about seniors well-being
1	Program variety
1	Exercise class
1	Good class leaders and teachers
1	Helping seniors with concerns and needs
1	Friendly supportive environment
1	Help with health issues
1	Visibility
1	Blind support group
1	Health and wellness
1	Volunteers
1	Grants obtained
1	Seniors with skills
1	Trips
1	Caring attitude
1	Being available
1	Access to medical/shopping
1	Doreen

1	Ashley
1	Strong in all areas
1	Helping disabled
1	Meeting the needs of the elderly
1	Taxes
1	Men's group
1	Low fares
1	Caregiver support

What areas can we improve?

Number of Responses	Needs Survey Comments Responses
2	None you are doing a great job
2	More evening events
2	Move the Penny Mill downstairs
2	Transportation
2	More educational and more entertaining events
2	Information and outreach
2	Better lunches
1	Outreach
1	More educational seminars-special events
1	Exercise classes would benefit from mirrors on the wall between grey doors
1	We all can use improving
1	Have people who will volunteer then keep information to themselves
1	Making new residents feel at home and help by telling them about new places and the community
1	More staff for specialized support groups
1	Work
1	Put a senior menu back in the Newburyport News.
1	Move some rooms around and use the veteran's office
1	Schedule so programs don't hit back-to-back or overlap
1	More trips to local events
1	Help those still with home with their repairs, mowing, snow,

	furnaces
1	Get own van for transportation
1	Daily/weekly contact with members
1	Christmas dinner singer not acquire
1	Sing-alongs
1	Do cookouts
1	Staff not friendly or chip except the front desk people
1	Penny mill clothes stained or not clean
1	Expand thrift shop Penny Mill could have its own room
1	Remain open minded about baby boomers
1	Social and educational opportunities for kids which appeal to all including newcomers
1	Advocacy
1	Needs small quiet space for 10 to 15 with quiet activities
1	Transportation scheduled every two hours
1	Wellness support with meditation, energy, work
1	Couple's activities
1	Public relations -- news on elder page
1	Get out information about services
1	Inconvenient location
1	More confidentiality
1	Better phone
1	Add exercise treadmill
1	Put a sign "to Senior Center "on ELM St.
1	More activities for men
1	Communicate between the departments
1	Educational programs like Lifelong Learning
1	Extended awareness
1	Less trips to casinos
1	More computers/classes
1	Library too small
1	Putting those over 60 on a mailing list
1	Advertising your events/ services
1	Lower our taxes
1	All medical related services be in nurse/ wellness not in an available space- HIPPA

1	More programming for younger seniors
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What other types of services or programs should the COA be looking to start?

Number of Responses	Needs Survey Comments Responses
3	Music the reversal language possibly a sing-along or get-together
2	More social events
2	Day trips
2	One to one computer training
2	Spiritual events on a nondenominational basis
2	Outdoor recreation
1	Some evening programs, feel group, ballroom dancing
1	A van for seniors who do not drive to provide outings outside of the area, for lunch and shopping not groceries necessarily
1	More people to participate more actively and are healthy minded
1	More rides for serving local doctors appointments
1	Annual craft show to show our talents
1	Weight watchers
1	Employment assistance
1	Trade program to trade services for other services
1	Patient advocacy
1	Help with Medicare forms coverage
1	Electronic/technical classes
1	Paperwork assistance producers (medical)
1	Help with medications money and schedule
1	Scrabble games
1	Weekly and monthly COA meetings with seniors
1	Group activities such as cards, Trivial Pursuit Scrabble
1	Classes on financial and medical
1	Alzheimer's information and information on clinical trials
1	Deaf meditation
1	Yoga
1	Book clubs

1	Bridge
1	Assorted activities to keep seniors busy
1	Notifies seniors about school events that are canceled
1	People to contact those living below
1	Help with heavy items
1	Chair exercise
1	Volunteer medical transportation group
1	Help home owners with repairs
1	More advice/services to those who own a home
1	Sunday church services for those with no ride
1	A senior his band for seniors who played instrument
1	An old car club
1	Outreach services to those who are home bound
1	Health problems speakers
1	Tax services/financial planning
1	End-of-life programs
1	Swimming pool, dark games, dances
1	Cooking class
1	Musical lessons drawn, if there are, harmonica
1	Northern Essex non-credit courses- we have a great space for them
1	Men's activities and projects like woodworking with volunteer guidance and insurance coverage, model making of all kinds, model trains
1	Seminars on retirement, SSI, Medicare etc.

If you do not attend the Senior Community Center can you tell us why?

Number of Responses	Needs Survey Comments Responses
15	Work full-time
9	Haven't needed it yet
5	Busy and no interest
4	Not old enough
2	We do not have an interest

2	Do not know if I qualified (age)
2	Working part-time
2	Do not receive any information
2	Still busy but enjoy knitting afghans
2	No time
2	Low vision
2	Transportation
2	Need to become more informed
2	Too busy
2	No need for programs yet
1	Hearing-impaired
1	Didn't know about it
1	Caring for or raising children
1	Type II diabetes and cancer in remission
1	Just turned 59
1	Just getting started
1	Just turned 65
1	If Amesbury taxes get any higher they are exorbitant if a further increase in real estate I seriously consider moving
1	Very busy but plan to join
1	Location is terrible no business is going to want to come into the area that planning taxes too high
1	Still active, maintain my property, not that time left
1	Although I have no familiarity with the COA a I appreciate the care and opportunities it offers
1	Come when I can- busy schedule
1	Do not know where it is, and do not know what it may offer that would interest or help me
1	Most activities go on while I am at work
1	Full of people who gossip
1	Busy on home improvement
1	Currently employed and healthy
1	Winter weather not very comfortable
1	Recovering from serious illness
1	Breathing issues hard to get around
1	Cancer treatments drain energy

1	Want to meet with younger people to keep energized
1	Because I want to go home when I feel like it
1	Do not really feel welcome
1	Family obligations for elder relative
1	Lunch is too early for me
1	Not a frail elder
1	Because I am a golfer
1	None of my friends in their 60s participate
1	Financially stable and enjoy good health
1	New to town have not yet explored in the center
1	Not my thing
1	Do not feel like a senior I'm 63 too busy
1	Work second shift
1	Cognitive issues don't know where it is
1	Chronic fatigue
1	Alone and afraid to do so
1	I live at the Elizabeth Calsey House needs are met
1	Housebound
1	At 73 I am not a senior and senior centers are depressing
1	Too busy with family and business
1	I should start
1	Physical limitations
1	Too many meds
1	New location
1	Medical appointments, family activities, shopping, and home interests
1	God first and then church family
1	Have others
1	No car
1	Diabetes and did not think of it
1	Do not know much about COA
1	Have not made it to new location yet
1	New to town
1	Need to have a tour of the center
1	No need but could use access to SHINE
1	Still well occupied may try art classes

1	Recently retired and no reason to attend
1	Medical and family involvement occupy our time as well as daily activities in the home

Additional Comments

Number of Responses	Needs Survey Comments Responses
4	Keep up the good work for our seniors
1	Unbalance of allocation expenses to family members
1	Involved with family church volunteers etc.
1	Still working
1	Caring for 92 1/2 year old mother who lives alone
1	I miss the old center, easier to get to, I've visited the new one rarely coming out is awful traffic coming in many ways
1	Although I have no familiarity with COA I appreciate the caring opportunities it offers
1	Doreen is the best thing that happened to our center thanks
1	Treat everyone with respect, kindness put information where it can be gotten to help assistance
1	Give new learning opportunities for age and social
1	Really need tax help
1	What a good walk away from the center
1	Keep cover and introductory letter separate
1	Phone numbers for the COA need to be better listed
1	Really enjoy exercise class
1	Nurse is not an RN or BS is an LPN
1	Appreciate Marie Metzner doing taxes
1	Pain and disability affects daily activities
1	Don't know age eligibility for a CO A
1	Will try to learn more
1	Access questions
1	Have footbridge cleared of snow
1	Are willing to volunteer to play piano in May and June
1	Garden more outside tables and a café

1	Thank you to Outreach and ACE
1	Income tax help is a fantastic
1	You people splendid work best regards
1	Access needed for timely pickup
1	Play 45
1	Programs that include the family
1	Coordinator to help transport to center
1	First names on badges for workers
1	Continue reading seniors get youth interested
1	I would like to mow but can't have the salt
1	A sign on Elm Street
1	Too many cooks in charge
1	In way the cards
1	The center is a reflections community spirit
1	Love the plays
1	Don't know much about COA
1	Best of luck in the new center
1	Lower our taxes
1	Thank you for reaching out to our community who knows what the future holds but I know who holds the future
1	I have heard that the center is not friendly or welcoming
1	Should have tours for new seniors at different times
1	I hear only positive things about the senior center
1	I look forward to day out Tuesday
1	Group projects, men and women working together on one central theme such as quilt or furniture, to be entered in the Topsfield Fair and later auctioned as a money raiser

What does it all mean?

This section will break down the items and look at current services offered and areas of growth.

Where do people seek information or help?

The first group is the person's family, followed by doctor/nurse/social worker, internet, pharmacist, neighbor, clergy, lawyer, COA, ESMV and other.

People overwhelmingly said family and doctor/nurse/social worker as their primary place to seek information and help. This is key for the COA as it is evident the need to continue to expand on caregiver support, educate the community and reach out to family members and

medical personnel about services and resources. The internet was third on the list which leads the COA into further enhancing the website that is hosted through the City. The next largest response was friends, it is important for the COA to continue to work with seniors to spread the word not only about the services but also the resources the COA brings to the table.

Areas of concern or problems that individuals face:

a. Financial/Legal

This section people identified taxes as the leading concern followed by retirement, paying rent/mortgage, paying utilities. The COA will continue to work with the assessor's office on educating seniors on abatements as well as promote the tax work off programs. Money concerns are a factor facing seniors - not having enough. This is a more complex issue and one that warrants more in-depth analysis. Agencies such as Community Action and Pettingill House at times have monies to aid with rent and utilities. This is clearly a concern for seniors and outside resources will be sought to better address this area.

b. Health/Safety Needs

This section identified the top concerns as health insurance followed by general health concerns, lack of exercise, physical disability and paying for meds/treatment. There are many local resources available to seniors in Amesbury. The COA receives grant monies to help pay for prescriptions and foot care, a wonderful SHINE (Serving the Health Information Needs of Elders) counselor who volunteers 3 times per month at the COA and many free and low cost exercises. It is important too for the COA to continue to outreach to the community and families regarding services offered.

c. Household / Personnel Care Needs

The top area of concern is housecleaning followed by organization/clutter, grocery shopping and laundry/personnel mobility. What is evident here is that education on homecare services that seniors may be eligible for, through either Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley or Veterans Services needs to occur in the community at large, with the assistance of the COA.

d. Housing/Living Situation Needs

The top item is repairs/upkeep followed by affordability then dropping down to accessibility and neighborhood safety. The idea of repairs and upkeep is crucial to many seniors. The reality is ladders are not safe. This area will be looked at for grants to aid in minor home repair for seniors.

e. Social/Transportation/Family needs

The top concern in this section is accessing social activities followed by finding volunteer opportunity, driving and contact with close family and friends. This area has a multitude of different areas of support. The COA offers computer classes to assist seniors in learning technology so they can access items such as Skype to keep in contact with family/friends. A decrease in social activities can be difficult due to transportation needs. There are daily social events at the SCC available to all seniors with free transportation to the SCC. Volunteer

opportunities are abundant in Amesbury - simply let the COA know what you like to do and we will direct you to where you can access services.

Resources utilized at the Senior Community Center

This area shows us the number of times that people checked off for activities, the largest being the newsletter followed by special events, trips and tours, socializing, health/wellbeing and games/bingo/cards. This gives a snap shot of activities and peoples prescriptive on services accessed.

Focus for the next five years

When asked what the seniors felt should be the focus of the SCC for the next five years the seniors reported the following. Fitness and healthy aging as the number one response followed by educational seminars, programing for frail seniors, caregiver support and evening programs. What are we currently doing to address this? We have been fortunate to have the FCOA receive a caregiver support grant (ACE-Amesbury Caregiver Essentials) to provide a program coordinator for the FCOA/COA to administer this grant and provide services to caregivers. A new program was initiated in February at the time this survey was being mailed called the Chronicle Club which is similar to a social day program for frail seniors. Currently this program runs three days a week in 3 hour blocks.

Areas the COA does well in

The seniors feel that the Senior Community Center is a positive environment, does well in public awareness/newspaper/TV/radio, transportation, community engagement, support groups, outreach and caregiver support (ACE).

Summary: Where do we go from here?

So what does all this mean? What was learned out of the survey is that the top four areas that will be developed over the next five areas are fitness and healthy aging, educational seminars, frail elder programing and caregiver support. These areas will be explored, programs developed and grants will be sought. Currently the FCOA receives a grant for caregiver support from Tufts Health Plan foundation for the Amesbury Caregiver Essential (ACE) program. Evening programs/seminars will be developed and implemented based on survey results. The current frail elder program –Chronicle Club will be considered for an expansion and grants sought for this purpose.

The top areas of concerns for seniors in Amesbury will be explored and supports be developed. As people age their health care and financial needs may change. The COA is working on developing a plan to aid seniors to age in their home in a manner that is safe, healthy and supportive. The COA will be sending out interim updates on the status of services and implementation over the next year.

Follow up will occur in the monthly newsletter. This is where you can read each month how we have addressed an area or concern. This will also be the place where the written comments will be addressed.

The public is welcomed to the COA board meeting which is held monthly at the Amesbury Senior Community Center. Meetings are posted in the newsletter and in the clerk's office. The meeting is most often the second Thursday of the month at 4pm.

We encourage you to download from the web site (<http://www.amesburyma.gov/government.cfm?subpage=157896>) for meeting agenda or you may pick these reports up at the COA. Please feel free to contact Annmary I. Connor, LICSW Amesbury COA Director for more information at 978- 388-8138 or via email at connora@amesburyma.gov.

Contributors to the survey are: Doreen Brothers- Outreach Worker, Ashley Stuart- ACE Coordinator, Jeanne Marie- Volunteer Coordinator, Carolyn Levesque- Activities Coordinator, Marina Polcaro- MSW Intern Simmons College, Elder Services of the Merrimack Valley (ESMV), Courtney Ouellet- Intern Stonehill College, Shaunna Ring and Allison Heartquist. Report completed by Annmary I. Connor, LICSW COA Director.

A big thank you to the many special volunteers who played an important role with this needs assessment!